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C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 002566

SIPDIS

NEW DELHI FOR DEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/05/2010

TAGS: [ECON](#) [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: POPPY FIELD CONFIRMED IN WESTERN BANGLADESH

Classified By: P/E Counselor D.C. McCullough, reason para 1.4(d)

11. (C) On May 30, Director General of the BDG's Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) Mohammed Kamaluddin Ahmed confirmed to econoff reports of opium cultivation in Bangladesh. On the margins of a meeting between Ahmed and ICITAP TDYer, econoff raised reports from a local NGO that DNC investigators had recovered poppies from a remote area earlier this year and presented them as evidence to the DG in his office.

12. (C) Ahmed confirmed that investigators found poppy plants, in western Bangladesh. Subsequent investigation of the area by border security forces, he said, found a "small" poppy field of a few acres, which farmers said was for producing poppy seeds for use as a cooking spice. The security forces reportedly destroyed the crop. Ahmed stated that he has ordered patrols to be more vigilant, and that they have not found any more fields. The DG affirmed there is no evidence of poppy cultivation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region.

13. (C) Comment: The NGO that provided the reports to econoff is APON, which operates a 12-step recovery program for drug addicts. APON Director Brother Ron Drahozal has long maintained that poppies are cultivated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, but DNC officials in Dhaka had previously downplayed such reports as unconfirmed.

CHAMMAS